

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the paragraph bridging pages 4-5 of the specification with the following replacement paragraph:

The variant ~~polynucleotides~~ polypeptides of the invention may comprise a modified signal peptide or leader sequence, i.e. amino acids 1 to 48 of SEQ ID NO: 2, amino acids 1 to 48 of SEQ ID NO: 4 and amino acids corresponding thereto in polypeptide variants thereof. Modifications meant hereby are those which increase the secretion of IL-15 from a cell. Biological assays for testing whether a modification increases said secretion are well known in the art and are described in (5) and (6). Most preferably, the signal peptide is modified by replacing it with the signal peptide of CD33 polypeptide (Accession No. NM 02 1293). Moreover, the N- or C- terminal amino acids of the mature polypeptide shown in SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO: 4 or amino acids corresponding thereto in the polypeptide variants may be modified as to increase stability of the mature polypeptides. The stability of mature IL-15 polypeptides can be tested by routine techniques (5) and (6). Preferred modifications are inserting a FLAG epitope tag to the N-terminal or C-terminal amino acid of the mature IL-15. Instead of a FLAG epitope, an HA or myc epitope can be used.

Please replace the paragraph bridging page 18, lines 11-12 of the specification with the following replacement paragraph:

Most preferably, the animal referred to hereinabove is a dog, a cat, a horse, a rabbit, a sheep, a camel, a mouse, a rat, an alpaca, a vicuna, a guanaco or a llama.